

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Currently, claims 49-68 are pending in the present application, including independent claim 49. Independent claim 49, for instance, is directed to a personal care product comprising a nonwoven web, wherein the nonwoven web comprises a multicomponent fiber. The multicomponent fiber contains a first component and a second component, the first component comprising a fiber-forming polymer and the second component comprising an active agent and a positive displacement carrier. The positive displacement carrier comprises a water-soluble polymer and facilitates controlled migration of the additive to a surface of the fiber.

In the Office Action, previous claims 14-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,723,428 to Foss, et al. Foss, et al. is directed to a synthetic fiber that contains an antimicrobial additive in the sheath. For example, Figs. 1-2 illustrates a bicomponent fiber 10A that contains a sheath component S and a core component C. The sheath component S may contain an antimicrobial additive A and a hydrolysis-resistant polymer (e.g., polyethylene terephthalate, polyethylene, or polybutylene terephthalate, or poly-1,4-cyclohexane dimethylene terephthalate) to hold the antimicrobial additives in the sheath over time. (Cols. 21-22).

Applicants respectfully submit that Foss, et al. does not expressly disclose each limitation of the present claims, such as the use of a positive displacement carrier that comprises a water-soluble polymer (e.g., polyvinyl alcohol, sodium alginate,

hydroxypropyl methylcellulose, chitosan, polyethylene glycol, tetramethylene ether glycol, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, and hydroxymethyl cellulose). As discussed in Applicants' specification, such a positive displacement carrier (e.g., polyvinyl pyrrolidone) facilitates controlled migration of the active agent to a surface of the fiber to minimize the amount of agent needed in the multicomponent fiber while also extending the useful life of the personal care product. (Appl., p. 2, line 19 – p. 3, line 1). The resulting multicomponent fiber thus provides a wide degree of control over the rate and uniformity of delivery of the active agent when the personal care product it in use (e.g., being worn by a user). (Appl., p. 1, lines 15-17). Although Foss, et al. cursorily mentions that the second component of the fiber (e.g., the sheath) may be made hydrolysis-vulnerable to allow blooming (Col. 12), it does not specifically contemplate the type of positive displacement carrier set forth in the present claims.

Thus, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present claims are not anticipated by Foss, et al. It is believed that the present application is in complete condition for allowance and favorable action, therefore, is respectfully requested. Examiner Torres Velazquez is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned, however, should any issues remain after consideration of this Amendment.

Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 04-1403.

Appl. No. 10/600,301
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Respectfully submitted,
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